

• Abroad •

London. The economic and political consequences of South Africa's withdrawal from the British Commonwealth, which becomes effective on May 31, has occupied the British Parliament in recent weeks. Mr. Duncan Sandys, outlining the government position in the debate on the Republic of South Africa Bill, said South Africans in the future would no longer have the right to claim British nationality as they do today. It was the feeling of the government that to continue to confer this and other Commonwealth privileges on South Africa would lessen the value of membership. But Britain is also conscious of the fact that demands by the more hostile members of the Commonwealth, Ghana and Ceylon among them, that all ties—trade and otherwise—with South Africa be severed would hurt the other Commonwealth partners very little, but cause economic dislocations on the British Isles since South Africa is an important customer for British cars and industrial products. This, of course, is why the British Labour Party has not pressed harder for a complete break with South Africa.

Paris. The French press, and it would have us believe, the French Government, jumped on the rumor that CIA agents had encouraged the Generals' Revolt and immediately elaborated the story with delicious details. *Le Monde*, notoriously anti-American, first gave the rumor credibility. But it was Jean Jacques Servan-Schreiber's *L'Express* which drew the darkest picture of master-spy Allen Dulles and his "state within a state." *Express* stated bluntly that the "highest French authorities" now believe both that the CIA was involved in the Algiers coup and that General Challe would never have embarked on his revolt without CIA's support. As *Express* unfolds its story—in the conditional tense peculiar to French journalism in cases of this sort—American CIA agents "would have" met the conspirators in Madrid on April 12 and "would have" assured them that if the coup succeeded the United States Government would recognize the new French Government within 48 hours. (How agents of the "state within a state" could commit the United States Government to an action of this impudence is not mentioned.) Other French newspapers even hinted that General Norstad, NATO Supreme Commander, might have been involved on the interesting grounds that both Norstad and Challe served with NATO forces and therefore, presumably, knew each other. No French journalist, however diligent in digging out these and other anti-American details, apparently thought it worth the space to report that the very first story tying CIA to the Generals' Revolt appeared 48 hours after the coup—in *Pravda*.

Luang Prabang. The key to the well-being of the twenty million persons—descendants of the builders of fabulous Angkor and the great Khmer civilization—who live in the interior of Southeast Asia is the mighty Mekong river. Rising, like the Brahma-putra, Yangtze and Hwang Ho,

in the Tibetan mountains, the Mekong flows down through a corner of China to Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and the South China Sea. Under a program initiated two years ago by the United Nations, a group of experts from France, Canada, Australia, Japan and the United States, directed by Dr. C. Hart Schaaf, is completing a survey for a twenty year, \$600 million project to develop the Mekong, its valley and its tributaries, integrating power, irrigation, flood control and transport—an MVA, in short. Enthusiasts believe that, if means could be found to undertake it, this project, by unifying as well as advancing the Southeast Asian economy, would also promote a political cooperation that would greatly strengthen the region's resistance to Chinese Communist pressure.



Bernie-France

"—Oops! Sorry! I thought you were 'General Salun'!"

New Delhi. To the Indian nationalists, struggling for independence from the British Raj, it was a major source of bitterness that English was India's only "universal language": not that everyone spoke it—only 7 million out of 375 in truth did so—but because it was the only language common to the entire administrative elite and bureaucracy, the language of government, courts, journalism and literature, etc. The Constitution of independent India declared that within a decade Hindi—though actually only a minority tongue among India's several hundred—was to be official. But the decade passed last year with English, in the rather odd Indian version, more strongly entrenched than ever, and spreading more rapidly than any local vernacular. The Constitutional clause has been quietly suspended.

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